

A 90 Day Report

I am honored to have been elected by the Town of Smyrna citizens to serve as your mayor.

It seems as though so little time has passed since the April election, but we have closed the first quarter of my term, and there is a lot to report. Regardless of a few "bumps" along the way and a small number of "nay-sayers," our town is healthy, prosperous, and growing efficiently.

First, I am pleased to report that the town is in very good financial shape, with adequate reserves and sound business practices in place to use our funds wisely. The FY 2006 audit has been completed and I am pleased that we received high marks, with no problems. High energy and health insurance costs continue to drive our budget expenditures, while a slowdown in residential sales has reduced our revenues, but the town's staff, with the guidance of the Council's Finance Committee, is running the town's business efficiently and effectively.

Much happens behind the scenes that effects and improves your quality of life. Among them are the relocation and removal of overhead electric lines in the downtown area, improvement to curbs along N. Main Street, the redesign and upgrading of the former Happy Harry's parking lot to allow additional parking downtown, and this year's major street improvement program, scheduled for later this summer. Plans are underway to create more downtown parking. Funding has been obtained from the School District to help support a second Youth Officer in our schools. In depth planning and aggressive negotiation is underway with developers throughout the town to be sure that they bear the infrastructure associated costs of their developments, while contributing to the wise and efficient extension of our important utilities to support our growth and prosperity.

In addition to the six new businesses recently announced for the Simons Corner Shopping Center, the Best Western hotel is soon to open; Sports Zone, a sport-oriented restaurant had its grand opening last week; a Dunking Donuts/Baskin Robbins is coming to Gateway North Center; the relocation of the Smyrna Diner project has started; and the Royal Farms project will soon begin. Many other new or expanded business activities are underway, among them are a new Rite Aid being built at Carter Road, services continue to expand at the Smyrna Health and Wellness Center (Christiana Care), Bay Health is pursuing plans to expand its' services, a new office/medical building is nearing completion at Deak Drive, a new State Health & Service Center is being built, Tender Loving Care on Carter Road and more exciting opportunities are soon to come. All over town there are signs of business and residential investment – good indicators that people feel confident about the community and its future.

Many other actions are taking place too. Our library continues its reading programs and library usage is exploding; the Parks Committee has sponsored great recreational events as part of its summer program; with the help of Representative Ennis, plans have been approved for Phase I of landscaping improvements to US 13 near Lake Como; plans for improved park and trails systems have been drafted and submitted for state grants; Transportation Enhancement funds for the downtown streetscape improvements have been restored by the state; and a “1000 Trees” program is being developed with the State Forestry Division to help Smyrna become a “green town”, improve the environment and appearance of the community, and to restore the health of the “urban forests” of the town.

Council is conducting regular workshops on proposed new zoning and land development regulations, a difficult and time consuming process, but one that is critical to ensure that we protect ourselves against undesirable activities while giving property owners flexible and reasonable guidelines. Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Adjustment have agreed to form two separate commissions to ensure equity and fairness in both proceedings. And, an Ad Hoc Council Committee is working on possible refinements to the Town Charter to address a number of concerns raised by residents and voters last spring.

Finally, I want to recognize the Town staff for their dedication, they often are taken for granted. Additionally, the town staff is completing training under the National Incident Management Program to ensure that we are better prepared for natural or human caused emergencies and to produce an emergency awareness plan.

Recently, the Town was named by National Geographic Adventure magazine as one of eleven best small towns for healthy, adventurous living. I am proud of our community and the many positive things that are happening in Smyrna. We won't always please everyone and we will, as citizens and as local government officials, disagree from time to time. But if we listen to each other and put our community and its best interests forward, Smyrna will continue to be a great place to live, work, do business and raise a family.

Mayor Pat Strombaugh